

December 2005

# Sierra

North Alabama Group



Visit our website  
<http://alabama.sierraclub.org/na.html>

**Holiday Party Thursday,**  
**December 15, 6:30 p.m.**

Bring a covered dish and photos from last year to share.

**Tuesday Night Downtown Hikes**

Join us at 6 p.m. at the Land Trust Office Parking lot, 907 Franklin St. for a hike around downtown Huntsville.

### Annual Holiday Party!

Yes, we like to hike, rock-hop, bicycle, back-pack, float and paddle. We like to contact political leaders and agency board members about issues we feel strongly about. We enjoy expanding our knowledge bank by listening to guest speakers, and we occasionally enjoy expanding our bellies with tasty food.

This month, we eat. North Alabama Sierra will furnish ham and turkey. Guests will bring side dishes. Bring a hearty appetite, too.

Bring, too, some photographs you've made in the past year. We will have ourselves a little contest just to add an edge to the pleasure of sharing. Categories will be plants, animals, scenes and people. We can make an "other" category if the need arises. A prize will be awarded to the photograph judged best by a panel of members.

So, bring three or four things to the meeting at the library on December 15 at 6:30: food, photos and an appetite. If you have not mailed your ballot for the executive committee, bring that, too. We will have extra ballots available at the party.

- Brenda Cummings

### Green Power

Purchasing two blocks of Green Power for one year is the environmental equivalent of planting an acre of trees in the Tennessee Valley or not driving your car for four months, according to the Green Power Switch News. Huntsville Utilities customers can buy electricity generated by clean, renewable resources like solar, wind, and methane gas by signing up for \$4 monthly blocks: Call HU at 535-1255.

- Sam Denham

### Excom Elections

New members are needed for the North Alabama group executive committee. Please take a few moments to read about the following candidates and vote!

#### Tom Burley

I enjoy hiking and backpacking and try to be on the trail every weekend. I am a hike leader and am actively involved in the outings program. I believe that outings are our best source of new members. I am committed to preservation of the environment for ourselves and future generations as we are a part of the earth and all its creatures. However, I believe that an eclectic approach that addresses environmental and economic issues is needed. I look forward to serving the Sierra Club in any way that I can.

#### Lee Hollingsworth

I have been a member of the Sierra Club since 1998 and am currently the outings chair. I love being outdoors and sharing that enjoyment with others.

#### Doug Horacek

I have been interested in nature since my youth. I moved here seven years ago from St. Louis where I was an active Member of the Missouri Botanical Garden. In the past seven years I have been an active member of the Sierra Club, the Wildflower Society, and the North Alabama Land Trust, and I lead hikes for all three groups. I have served on the Excom of the Sierra Club for at least four years. I have served in the programs and conservation areas and supported conservation by participating in Honeysuckle cleanups. My strong conservation background is a good reason to consider me as a voting member of the Excom.

#### Judy Jones

I have been a Sierra Club member for 11 years and during that time I have held the positions of co-newsletter editor (outings), Vice ExCom Chair and ExCom Chair.

I think a clean and safe environment is the responsibility of everyone. Not everyone wants to stand in a picket line or

march on the White House but, there are many small ways, such as recycling, using energy wisely at home and at work, by joining a water monitoring team, which can help protect the environment. Saving and rehabilitating land is also another way to get involved in taking care of the environment. I want my grandchildren and future generations to have a wonderful place to live and play.

#### Sandy Kiplinger

I've been a member of the Sierra Club since 1993. I have hiked the West and East Coasts (including Canada) and lots of trails in between. I returned to backpacking this past year. I've canoed in circles with the best and even rode a one speed bicycle 20 miles in the sand on a mosquito infested island. I completed the hike leader training this year and intend to become active in leading hikes and backpacks. My passion is the challenge and interest in helping to preserve our planet for tomorrow's adventurer. I want to become involved in helping today's youth become interested in the outdoors so that they can take over as stewards of our planet.

### December 2005 North Alabama Sierra Club Executive Committee Ballot

Vote for 4 Excom members from the candidates below

Mail this ballot by December 20th to  
North Alabama Sierra Group  
PO Box 1893  
Huntsville, AL 35807

Or

Bring this ballot to the December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting/Holiday Party at the Huntsville Public Library. We will have extra ballots at the party.

Single      Joint

_____	_____	Tom Burley
_____	_____	Lee Hollingsworth
_____	_____	Doug Horacek
_____	_____	Judy Jones
_____	_____	Sandy Kiplinger

### New Members Wanted!

The new member contest is still under way! Remember, the club member who signs up the most new recruits will receive a cash prize of \$100.00. All new checks (\$25.00) should be mailed to: David Kostowny 116 Pebblebrook Circle, Madison, AL 35758. Phone: 325-2296. E-mail: [divadlk@msn.com](mailto:divadlk@msn.com)

### Join the Sierra Club or Renew your Membership for \$25

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your chapter newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to:  
David Kostowny  
116 Pebblebrook Circle  
Madison, AL 35758.



### New Outfitter Store in Huntsville

There is a new outdoor shop in Huntsville - Trailhead Inc. has opened in the Five Points area at 604 Andrew Jackson Way across the street from Mullins. The store carries backpacking and wilderness camping equipment, as well as gear for trail running and climbing. Trailhead Inc is also a full service bike shop. The store is open Tue-Fri from 10:00-6:30, Saturday from 9:00-5:00 and Sunday from 1:00-5:00. You can reach them at 534-1333.

Stop by and see what the new shop has to offer. And please remember to support all of our local outdoor shops!  
- the Editor

### Sierra Club Calendars for 2006 Now Available

Looking for the perfect "stocking stuff" holiday gift for that special someone who loves beautiful nature scenes? Once again, the N.A. Sierra Club is selling the 2006 Sierra Club Wilderness Wall Calendar and Engagement Calendar. Both the wall calendar and engagement calendar are \$10 each... less than most commercial calendars or direct order calendars from National. What a great gift for friends, teachers and those distant relatives who have everything.

The calendars will be available for sale at the Holiday party Thursday, December 15 at the main library downtown. Or you can call Judy Jones at 852-6179.



- the Editor

### Court: Alabama Erred in Gold Mining Permit Approval

In a decision, nearly five years in the making, the Cleburne County, Alabama, Circuit Court ruled that the Alabama Environmental Management Commission (AEMC) erred in approving a permit for HarGal Mining Partnership. The court reversed the AEMC order approving the permit and ruled that the former antidegradation rule did not provide adequate standards; that the AEMC failed to consider Petitioner's objections; and that the AEMC failed to include findings on the sufficiency of permit limits.

The permit would have allowed HarGal to discharge pollutants into Little Terrapin Creek, Hog Creek, and an unnamed tributary of Little Terrapin Creek, also located in Cleburne County. Represented by the Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation (LEAF), Friends of Terrapin Creek challenged the permit in Circuit Court after the AEMC approved the proposed permit without evaluating the objections of the groups. Other parties challenging the AEMC decision were Wild Alabama and Wild South. The facility never started operation.

For more information on the case and on LEAF, see [www.leaflaw.org](http://www.leaflaw.org)

### OCEANA to Test for Mercury in Muscle Shoals

Oceana is a marine conservation organization that is studying the levels of mercury in seafood. The organization is currently focusing their efforts on mercury pollution from chlor-alkali plants that continue to use outdated

technology. The OxyChem plant in Muscle Shoals is one of these plants. A representative from OCEANA will be traveling to the Shoals area the week of December 12<sup>th</sup> to scout out the site of the plant, and possibly organize a hair-testing event of local residents.

Last month the organization collected samples in Augusta, GA and Port Edwards, WI. If you are interested in working with OCEANA to set-up the hair-testing event, contact Dawn Winalski, Campaign Projects Manager.  
[dwinalski@oceana.org](mailto:dwinalski@oceana.org), 202-467-1920

### Savage Gulf Under Threat

A housing development under way by Roland Monette encompasses about 500 acres along the bluff and surrounding Ranger Creek across the Gulf and to the southwest of Stone Door. This development threatens to spoil the view shed of Savage Gulf. Friends of the South Cumberland President Scott May has had discussions with Mr. Monette regarding his development plans and whether or not the development will include bluff lots. Mr. Monette has thus far declined to provide any details regarding his development plans and has also declined face to face meetings with Friends board members.

A gravel road has been laid to the property. Underground electricity has been run. There is a large inventory of 6 inch water pipe on site in preparation for laying water lines. The development is obviously moving forward at a rapid pace.

The Friends goal is to assure that the view shed of Savage Gulf will not be destroyed and that the wilderness character of Savage Gulf will not be ruined by seeing houses on the bluff from Stone Door or the Big Creek Rim Trail. The illusion of wilderness is one of the most valuable characteristics of the Park, which is why the Friends have been working diligently to raise money through our Saving Great Spaces campaign to purchase property surrounding the Park to keep the view shed and wilderness character of the Park intact.

The Friends of the South Cumberland board is hoping to negotiate an agreement that will be good for all parties. Friends activism with TVA kept the gates open at Foster Falls several years ago and a further result of their efforts in working cooperatively with TVA includes new restroom facilities and the outstanding boardwalk and viewing platform for handicapped visitors. We can make good things happen when we all work together.

For more information and to get involved, contact the Friends of South Cumberland State Recreation Area, Inc. <http://www.friendsofscsra.org/activities.htm>

- Ron Castle, Friends of SCSRA Board Member

### 2005 ExCom Members

Chair	Judy Jones	852-6179
Vice Ch/Treas.	Sam Denham	539-1033
Conservation	Bruce Martin	256-725-2168
Fund Raising	Freddie DiPlacido	533-0651
Membership	Dave Kostowny	325-2296
Newsletter	Jack Drost	880-2644
Outings	Lee Hollingsworth	461-3060
Publicity	Liz Poleretzky	461-5819
Programs	Brenda Cummings	881-7447
Programs Logistics Coordinator		
	Doug Horacek	772-6788
Secretary	Judy Burley	883-4267
Tuesday Hikes	Nancy Dudney	882-9408
Web Page	Steven Baty	489-0990

# North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar

## December 2005 - January 2006

### Holiday Party

#### Thursday December 15, 6:30pm. Downtown Library auditorium.

Bring a dish and your best outdoor photos. Details on front page. for details.

### Hike Ratings

**Easy**-Less than 5 miles, no serious elevation changes, no trail obstacles.

**Moderate**-5 to 10 miles, some elevation changes or rough trail (rock hopping), or trail obstacles such as creek crossings.

**Strenuous**-More than 10 miles, substantial elevation change (1000 ft or more), trail may be rocky, obstructed or nonexistent.

**Exploratory**-any event the leader has not experienced before, may fit any class above.

#### Saturday, Dec 10 – Monte Sano hike.

**Moderate.** Meet at 9:00am at the Monte Sano Hiker's parking lot for short Monte Sano dayhike. Do Mountain Mist, the Sinks, connector between the Goat and Keith trails, the Stone Cuts, Logans Point, Super Cuts and back. Bring water. Call Doug Horacek for more information at 772-6788.

#### Sunday, Dec 11 - Aldridge Creek

**Cleanup. Easy.** We have not been back to Aldridge Creek in a couple of years, so there is probably quite a bit to pick up. Please bring clippers, loppers or any tools that you think would make picking up trash easier. I would suggest heavy work gloves and water as well. Meet at the entrance to Ditto Landing at 1:00pm and we will work our way North. This will give us about 4 hours for the clean-up. Info. Judy Jones 852-6179.

#### Tuesday, Dec 13, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy.

Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Nancy Dudley, 882-9408.

#### Saturday, Dec 17 - Pinhoti Trail

**Construction.** Work on the section of the trail right at the Georgia/Alabama line. Bring loppers, gloves, lunch, water. Other tools provided. Supper afterwards compliments of North Ala. Sierra Club. Call Sam Denham for meeting time and place. 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

#### Sunday, Dec 18 - Honeysuckle Jihad!!

Meet at 1:00pm at the trailhead on Toll Gate Road. Bring gloves, loppers and clippers. We'll provide soft drinks and water. Rated "work". Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

#### Sunday, Dec 18<sup>th</sup>, Signal Point Day

**Hike. Moderate.** Signal Point is the highest point on Signal Mountain. The hike from Signal Point to Edwards Point is part of the Cumberland Trail with striking overlooks of the Tennessee River Gorge. The hike is about seven miles. Bring lunch and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 8:00am at the former Winn Dixie location on Winchester Road. Info, Judy Burley, 883-4267 or [jburlley@knology.net](mailto:jburlley@knology.net)

#### Tuesday, Dec 20, 6:00pm – Christmas

**Lights Hike Downtown. Easy.** Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Hot chocolate, coffee and cookies will be provided. Leader: Bruce Martin, 256-725-2168.

#### Tuesday, Dec 27, 6:00pm - Downtown

**Evening Hike. Easy.** Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Liz Poleretzky, (wk) 461-5819.

### Excom Meeting

Thursday, Dec 29 - Outings 5:15, Excom 5:45. Liz Poleretzky, (wk) 461-5819.

#### Sat-Sun, Dec 31-Jan 1 – New Years on

**the Dome!! Moderate.** Time for our yearly celebration with a moderate winter backpack. 14 miles over 2 days. Stay at Mt. Collins shelter and travel to the dome for Champagne at midnight. Limited to 8 participants. Bruce Martin 256-725-2168.

**Sunday, Jan 1, 1pm. Get rid of the Hangover hike. Moderate.** Meet at Sam Denham's house for an afternoon hike in Monte Sano State Park. Rated moderate, may include a brief rock-hop. Hot cider and (more) beer by the fireplace after the hike. 539-1033(h).

**Tuesday, Jan 3, 6:00pm - Downtown Evening Hike. Easy.** Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Judy Burley, 883-4267.

#### Sunday, Jan 8 - Little River Canyon

**Rock Hop/day hike. Strenuous.** A perennial favorite, hike the section between the Powell Trail and Eberhard Point. Rated strenuous, leader approval required; includes some bush whacking and one creek crossing. Meet at the old Winn Dixie on Winchester Rd. 8:30am. Sam Denham 539-1033(h), 961-0436(w).

#### Tuesday, Jan 10, 6:00pm - Downtown

**Evening Hike. Easy.** Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Virgil DeStefano, 539-0348.

### Newsletter Labeling

#### Wednesday, January 11th, 5:30pm.

Barbara Martin's office, Holmes Ave at Church St. Info: Judy Jones 852-6179.

#### Friday - Monday, Jan 13<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> - Big

**South Fork Backpack. Strenuous.** Covering 31 miles total, passing the two largest natural arches in the eastern U.S., we will be hiking 16.2 miles of the John Muir Trail, encountering abandoned Structures of generations ago, and if the weather cooperates, seeing lots of cliff-hanging icicles. May be cancelled / modified if poor weather due to travel through flood areas. Depart Friday 8:00am, return Monday by 5 pm. Contact Steven Baty, 489-0990.

#### Saturday, Jan 14<sup>th</sup> - Fiery Gizzard Day

**Hike, Strenuous.** Perhaps one of the most diverse and beautiful trails in Tennessee, the terrain is steep and extremely rocky. We will follow the Fiery Gizzard trail passing the 500 year old hemlock, Blue Hole Falls, Sycamore Falls, and the Fruit Bowl rock formation before beginning our arduous climb to Raven Point and a spectacular overlook. We return via the Doghole Trail. The hike is about ten miles and definitely strenuous. Bring lunch and water and we will dine afterwards at a local restaurant. Meet at 8:00am at the old Winn Dixie location on Winchester Road. Contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or [tdburley@knology.net](mailto:tdburley@knology.net)

#### Tuesday, Jan 17, 6:00pm - Downtown

**Evening Hike. Easy.** Meet at Huntsville Land Trust Office, 907 Franklin St. Leader: Bruce Martin, 256-725-2168.

#### Saturday, Jan 21 - Monte Sano

**dayhike. Moderate.** Meet at Monte Sano hiker's parking lot 9:00am. Cost \$1.00. Mountain Mist trail, Sinks, Stone Cuts, Logans Point, Super Cuts, the Keith trail. Bring a lunch, water and sturdy hiking boots. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 for more information.

#### Saturday-Sunday, Jan 21-22 - Hobbs Cabin Backpack. Moderate.

Approximately 17 total miles. Call for meeting location & time. Liz Poleretzky, 461-5819 or [hiker@knology.net](mailto:hiker@knology.net).

#### Wednesday- Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> - Devils Fork Gap to Hot Springs

**Backpack, Strenuous.** This is a 35 mile self-sufficient backpack with significant elevation changes over three days. We will depart on Wednesday at 7:30am arriving in Hot Springs around 2:30pm, then take a shuttle to Devils Fork Gap. The descent into Hot Springs on Saturday overlooking the French Broad River is magnificent. We will spend Saturday night at the Hot Springs Campground on the French Broad River with a one hour soak in the mineral hot springs. Cost will depend on the number of participants but will be approximately \$35 per person. Group size will be limited. For further information contact Tom Burley at 883-4267 or [tdburley@knology.net](mailto:tdburley@knology.net)

### Other Outings / Events

*The following activities are not sponsored or administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no information about the planning of these activities and makes no representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision or management of such activities. They are published only as a reader service because they might be of interest to the readers of our newsletter.*

#### Saturday, Dec 10 - Day Hike Augusta Mine Ridge, Pinhoti Trail. Moderate.

Call 205-873-0569 This will be a moderate to strenuous 7- to 8 mile hike on the Pinhoti Trail, just north of Piedmont. This is one of the real scenic sections of the Pinhoti, and we have not hiked this section in several years. There will be an optional dinner in Anniston following the hike. Meet at the Kmart Parking Lot in Irondale at the corner of Crestwood Blvd and Montclair Rd (just off exit 132B of I-20 East) at 8:30am or at 10:00 am McDonalds on Highway 278 in Piedmont. Trip Leader, Dick Echols 205-873-0569

#### Monday, Dec 26 - Thirteenth annual post-Christmas Little River Canyon day hike. Strenuous.

This is a hike in the Little River Canyon National Preserve, and is rated strenuous. It will be a three-mile hike down Bear Creek Canyon from the canyon rim road to Eberhart Point, the deepest part of the main canyon. It is not a hike for the weak-hearted. It requires climbing and scrambling over logs and boulders as well as several creek crossings ( which usually can be done by rock hopping).

Wet rocks (from rain that morning or the night before) or icy rocks or a very high creek level could require the hike to be relocated. I can probably announce any change in the hike plan at the meeting place in Trussville, but marginal weather conditions at the preserve could mean a late minute change in plans. Prepare to be flexible. And expect to experience some of eastern North America's most spectacular wilderness. Meet 8:00am at the Cracker Barrel in Trussville. Optional dinner afterwards. Contact Carroll Wilson at 205-221-6196 or [mountain-man@mindspring.com](mailto:mountain-man@mindspring.com)

**Saturday, Dec 31 - Day hike Big Tree, Sipsey Wilderness. Moderate.** Hike via White Oak Hollow to the East Fork of Bee Branch in the Sipsey Wilderness of the Bankhead National Forest. Bee

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**North Alabama Sierra Club - Outings and Events Calendar**  
December 2005 - January 2006

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Branch is the home of a huge Tulip Poplar, often referred to as "The Big Tree". Along the way we will visit some interesting rock formations and some nice water falls. This is a 6-mile hike and rated moderate. Meet at the Hayden/Corner Park and Ride at 8:00am. Optional dinner after hike. Hike Leader Vicky Wilson 647-6961

**Saturday, Dec 31 – Night hike, Bonfire and Potluck – Hays Nature Preserve.**

Meet in the parking lot at 7:00pm Bring a blanket to sit on and something unusual to eat to share with others. We will walk a short way to the bonfire site, enjoy some great company, roast marshmallows and go on a nite ecohike afterwards. Hopefully the stars will be visible and we can see the Milky Way and some winter constellations.

If anyone has an instrument that they would like to bring, please do so!

The Hays Preserve is located south on US 431 from Huntsville/Hampton Cove. Turn left after mile marker 324 onto Hays Preserve Trail. From Guntersville and New Hope, turn right 0.9 mile after Mile Marker 323.

Be sure to dress for the weather, and pray for snow! The only fee is your dish of food to share.

Soos Weber, Ecologist

Hays Nature Preserve

[Susan.weber@hsvcity.com](mailto:Susan.weber@hsvcity.com)

256-427-5116